

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The claims are 9-12, 16-17 and 23. Claim 17 has been amended to better define the invention. Claim 9 has been amended in view of the addition of the element of "a cap" to claim 17. Support for the claims may be found, *inter alia*, in the disclosure in the paragraph bridging pages 8 and 9, the second full paragraph on page 10, the first and second full paragraphs of page 14, in the paragraph bridging pages 14 and 15 and FIG. 1. Reconsideration is expressly requested.

Claims 9-12, 16, 17 and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite because the Examiner took the position that main claim 17 failed to identify what element "the side" is a side of. In response, Applicants have amended claim 17, *inter alia*, to delete the recitation of "a side facing away from the bellows", thereby obviating the Examiner's rejections of these claims under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner's rejections to the claims under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, be withdrawn.

Claims 9-12, 16-17 and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Smith et al.* U.S. Patent No. 3,688,521 in view of *Muller et al.* U.S. Patent No. 4,630,834. Essentially, the Examiner's position was that *Smith et al.* discloses a fixed homokinetic joint as recited in the claims except for a plurality of folds such that the crests of the folds lie in essentially the same plane, that *Muller et al.* teaches this feature, and that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the joint of *Smith et al.* to have the feature of the plurality of folds of *Muller et al.* in order to provide the joint with an adequate lubricant seal.

In response, Applicants have amended independent claim 17 to better define the invention and respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection for the following reasons.

As set forth in claim 17 as amended, Applicants' invention provides a fixed homokinetic joint including an inner hub, an outer hub, a carrier housing encompassing and surrounding the outer hub, a plurality of tracks associated together in pairs provided in each of the inner hub and the outer hub, a plurality of balls received in the tracks, a cage guiding the balls to transfer a torque between the inner hub and the outer hub, a

sealing arrangement including a bellows, a closure cover which is not integrally formed with either the outer hub or the carrier housing and which is pressed into the carrier housing to form a seal, and a cap encompassing and surrounding the carrier housing and the outer hub.

The feature of the carrier housing encompassing the outer hub and the cap further encompassing the carrier housing and the outer hub has the benefit of improved sealing properties. In addition, the whole outer surface of the joint is relatively smooth and unruffled. Thus, the joint is especially suitable for use in SUVs as dirt or plants do not adhere to the joint in off road use.

None of the cited references discloses or suggests a fixed homokinetic joint having the structure set forth in claim 17 as amended, including a carrier housing encompassing and surrounding the outer hub, a closure cover which is not integrally formed with either the outer hub or the carrier housing, and a cap encompassing and surrounding the carrier housing and the outer hub.

As the Examiner has recognized, the primary reference to *Smith et al.* fails to disclose or suggest a plurality of folds such that the crests of the folds lie in essentially the same plane. In addition, contrary to Applicants' fixed homokinetic joint as recited in claim 17 as amended, the carrier housing 25 in *Smith et al.* does not encompass the outer hub, the cap 46 in *Smith et al.* does not encompass the carrier housing and the outer cap, and the closure cover of *Smith et al.* is integrally formed with the outer hub.

The defects and deficiencies of the primary reference to *Smith et al.* are nowhere remedied by the secondary reference to *Muller et al.*

Muller et al. does not teach any of these features related to the carrier housing, the cap, and the closure cover of Applicants' claim 17 as amended. *Muller et al.* discloses only a sealing disc 14 held by a clamping ring 13. The Examiner has taken the position that sealing disc 14 reads on Applicants' sealing arrangement comprising bellows as recited in claim 17 as amended. Accordingly, there is no carrier housing in *Muller et al.* that encompasses and surrounds the outer hub and no cap that encompasses and surrounds the carrier housing and the outer hub.

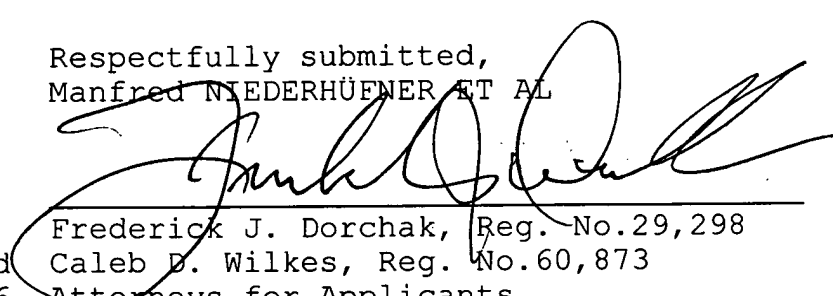
Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 17 as amended is patentable over *Smith et al.* and *Muller et al.*, whether considered alone or in combination.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 17 as amended, together with claims 9-12, 16 and 23, which depend directly or indirectly thereon, are patentable over the cited references.

In summary, claims 9 and 17 have been amended. In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the claims be allowed and that this application be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,
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